

Congressman Baird Helps Lead Effort to Ensure Math and Science Teachers Meet the Growing Challenges of a Global Marketplace (March 28, 2007)

Washington, D.C. - As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Science Education and Research, Congressman Brian Baird (WA-03) today seized the opportunity to assure that the U.S. is prepared to meet the growing challenges of the global marketplace with qualified, well-equipped math and science teachers in grades K-12.

Congressman Baird voted in support of H.R. 362, the *10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds* Science and Math Scholarship Act.

"By in large, the most important thing our country can do for our future economic health is to invest in math and science education, and more importantly, our math and science teachers," said Congressman Baird. "Teachers who have a strong understanding and passion for a subject will pass that enthusiasm onto their students. One of my top priorities in Congress is to provide teachers with the support and tools they need to be the best they can be; this is essential as we encourage the scientists of tomorrow."

The bill, co-sponsored by Congressman Baird, enacts the foremost recommendation of the National Academies' report *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: improve K-12 math and science education*.

That 2005 report was issued by a distinguished spectrum of national leaders in academia, industry and government. Their findings were alarming. Essentially, they noted that without immediate action, the U.S. may not be able to maintain global leadership in innovation and education.

Among the factors contributing to this conclusion, the panels found that in 2000 more than 85 percent of students in grades 5-9 were taught physical science by a teacher lacking a major or certification in the physical sciences. In 1999, 68 percent of U.S. 8th grade students received instruction from a mathematics teacher who did not hold a degree or certification in mathematics.

Their solution for lasting improvements in science and math education: teachers with a deep knowledge of their subject matter and effective teaching skills.

"My interest in science came early on, and I had wonderful teachers who inspired me to pursue a scientific career. Every child deserves that chance and we can make sure that our K-12 science and math teachers get the support they need to be as effective as possible in the classroom," added Congressman Baird.

H.R. 362 will:

• Create thousands of new teachers with content and instructive expertise in their area of teaching via the Noyce scholarship program at NSF.

• Create summer institutes and graduate programs that provide sustained, content-oriented professional development to teachers through Math Science Partnerships at NSF.

• Create centers for improvement of undergraduate education in STEM fields via the STEM Talent Expansion Program (STEP) program at NSF.

As the Baby Boom generation begins to retire, there will be a tremendous need for scientists and engineers to join this specific workforce," added Congressman Baird. "To sustain that enterprise, we need a workforce that is prepared in a world-class math and science educational system. Well-qualified, well-trained teachers are the key."

Two weeks ago, Congressman Baird hosted three roundtable discussions in the Third District with Dr. Cora Marrett from the National Science Foundation. These roundtables are part of an effort by Congressman Baird to hear input from various stakeholders on how to best integrate local and state efforts with federal policy.

H.R. 362 has been endorsed by a broad range of businesses and universities as well as industry and education groups, including the Business Roundtable, Association of American Universities, Council on Competitiveness, the College Board, Semiconductor Industry Association, and the Business Software Alliance.

The bill cleared the Committee and now advances to the full House for a full vote.

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